

**Town of La Pointe  
Town Board and Town Plan Commission  
Joint Meeting**

**Thursday, April 25, 2013**

**2:15 PM**

**La Pointe Town Hall**

**I. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Call to order at 2:20 PM by Ted Pallas

Present: Joan Martin, Carey Baxter, Suellen Soucek, Greg Thury, Charlie Brummer, Ted Pallas  
Greg Nelson, Nick Nelson, Marty Curry, Jim Patterson

Staff Present: Jen Croonborg-Murphy, Pete Clark

Public Present: Dave Thomas, Mike Starck, Lois Carlson, Michael McCarthy  
Tom Wojciechowski, University of Wisconsin, Extension

**II. Public Comment: none**

**III. Comprehensive Plan Revision**

**a. Introduction: Tom Wojciechowski, UW Extension by Jen Croonborg-Murphy.**

Mr. Wojciechowski began by introducing himself and listing the resources that he can tap for the Town.

Jen Croonborg-Murphy asked how the Town would like to work with Mr. Wojciechowski.

Lois Carlson asked if the Town would be starting over on the Comprehensive Plan.

Jen Croonborg-Murphy responded that a revision is required every ten years by statute.

Michael McCarthy referred to the possibility of asking teams of students with their professor to commit to this project.

Tom Wojciechowski replied that he would need to talk to the professors.

M. McCarthy added that fresh ideas would be helpful for the project.

Ted Pallas pointed out that not much money is budgeted for Comprehensive Plan revision this year.

J. Croonborg-Murphy added that there is \$2700 available and that will be needed for community outreach.

Jim Patterson stated the need to get it in the budget for 2014.

M. McCarthy referred back to using students and said that this could take three to four years to get started.

T. Wojciechowski asked what depth of revision the Town is looking at.

Ted Pallas added that the Town Plan Commission [TPC] wants to know from the Town Board what is expected. He stated that he felt that the Town needs to look down the road ten years, adding that "there is nothing here to encourage young families to stay here."

J. Croonborg-Murphy asked how the Town would like to use the Plan: does the Town wish to meet state mandate and then "keep it in the drawer," or do they wish to set goals for the future that would drive policy and budget. She added that to do an in-depth job may not cost more since the Town itself has some people that are valuable resources.

Carey Baxter pointed that the Town has to do the corrections.

Nick Nelson stated that he would like the Comprehensive Plan to be more specific than in the past, "as broad as we can afford to make it."

Greg Nelson stated that he feels the Plan should be more of a guideline; as it becomes more specific, a domino effect occurs that would necessitate an overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. He agreed with the idea of a survey and pointed out that the Plan itself allows for amendments generated by the public, but this has never happened.

Jim Patterson compared the Plan revision to painting the Golden Gate Bridge: as soon as you finish at one end, you need to begin again at the other. He added that the Zoning Ordinance revision was only recently completed to match the Comprehensive Plan. He agreed with the need to attract families.

Nick Nelson stated that he would like to move away from a data-driven Plan, and instead show more intent, more input from people.

J. Croonborg-Murphy suggested more “quality-of-life” questions in the survey if this is the goal.

Marty Curry pointed out the wide disparity of demographics on the Island and the differing needs of each.

Charlie Brummer suggested getting help from Tom Wojciechowski with the survey questions.

T. Wojciechowski suggested using the survey but then also sitting down with small groups of people; he called in “drilling down into the data.”

Jim Patterson pointed out that the summer residents have an investment in the Town “without much say.” He requested a model of a Comprehensive Plan from a Town in a similar demographic.

Joan Martin stated that there may be “summer people” planning to move here.

T. Wojciechowski stated that he is hearing three things from the meeting: 1.) a need to update the Plan; 2.) a Plan that is not constrictive and not necessarily tied to zoning; and 3.) a strategic plan may be desirable as well.

N. Nelson said that he would like a strategic plan to be part of the Comprehensive Plan.

J. Croonborg-Murphy pointed out that anything not in the Comprehensive Plan does not carry the requirement for zoning and the law to be aligned.

Suellen Soucek asked what’s important to people who live here.

J. Croonborg-Murphy stated that there needs to be a skeleton; so for now the group should decide how deep to go on the revision and how best to do it. Will it be strategic planning vs. forecast planning?

T. Wojciechowski suggested a method called “backcasting.” This involves looking at the Town from the viewpoint of the years from now and asking what it’s going to take to get there.

M. McCarthy urged the group to think of this as a process. He added that the current Comprehensive Plan is “missing some critical issues.” He suggested that the group ask the question “What if this happens?” He stated that a flexible plan is easier to improve.

J. Croonborg-Murphy asked if that model fits the nine elements of a Comprehensive Plan.

M. McCarthy said, “Don’t let the statute be the tail that wags the dog.”

Mike Starck pointed out that the “Steps” are all in the current Comprehensive Plan.

T. Wojciechowski said that half of the value of this process is in the Plan and half is in the discussion generated by the revision of the Plan.

J. Croonborg-Murphy suggested that it might be more helpful to ask visioning questions and decide from that how best to move forward; in other words, gather some information first.

Jim Patterson suggested beginning with a sustainable life style and affordable taxes and after that, see what’s on people’s minds.

J. Croonborg-Murphy suggested looking at all the past surveys for pattern recognition: do the same things appear on multiple surveys as a concern of the people.

M. McCarthy said that his experience has taught him that you need to ask new questions to get new ideas. He reiterated the need for college students to be part of the process and asking “What might we face over the next 15 years that we haven’t thought of?”

T. Wojciechowski asked what level of community involvement might be expected.

Jim Patterson gave the history of how the Comprehensive Plan was produced in the first place.

Mike Starck asked how many responses there were to the surveys that were done during that process.

J. Croonborg-Murphy responded that the Town had the highest rate of return in Ashland County.

Charlie Brummer added that in the 1992 survey, there 353 responses out of 689 distributed, 51.2%.

J. Croonborg-Murphy stated that working on the Zoning Ordinance served to identify areas that should be considered. She added that the land use map will likely not need to be revised. She pointed out that the Town Plan Commission has drafted a participation plan.

T. Wojciechowski said that he will look at the draft survey and the surveys of other towns.

Nick Nelson asked for a rough timeline.

T. Wojciechowski said that the Library’s Plan had taken 13-14 months to complete.

Marty Curry asked if it would be obsolete by the time it’s done.

T. Wojciechowski said that the components can be used as they are completed.

J. Croonborg-Murphy said that the timeline may depend on the budget.

- b. Resolution 2013-0425: Public Participation Plan: postponed till the Regular Town Board Meeting on May 14, 2013.
- c. 2013 Schedule and Budget: postponed
- d. Survey: postponed.

IV. Adjournment at 3:25 PM

**Submitted by Patty Hobin, Town Clerk**

**Approved as submitted on 5/14/13**

**Patty Hobin**

**Town Clerk**